

## Resources

### REPORT IT

If you or someone you know has been the victim of elder abuse, please call your local police department immediately.

If not an emergency, you may also call  
Norfolk District Attorney,  
William R. Keating's Office at  
781-830-4800 Ext. 287



### IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Massachusetts Executive Office  
of Elder Affairs Hotline  
800-922-2275

Attorney General's Hotline  
888-243-5337

The Department of Public Health  
800-462-5540



### LINKS TO ELDER RESOURCES

Norfolk District Attorney  
[www.state.ma.us/da/norfolk](http://www.state.ma.us/da/norfolk)

U.S. Government Administration on Aging  
[www.aoa.dhhs.gov](http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov)

Access America for Seniors  
[www.seniors.gov](http://www.seniors.gov)

National Fraud Information Center  
[www.fraud.org](http://www.fraud.org)

American Association of Retired Persons  
[www.aarp.com](http://www.aarp.com)

Securities and Exchange Commission  
[www.sec.gov/consumer/cyberfr.htm](http://www.sec.gov/consumer/cyberfr.htm)



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
**William R. Keating**  
Norfolk District Attorney

45 Shawmut Road • Canton, MA 02021  
(781) 830-4800 • (617) 769-6100  
[www.norfolkda.com](http://www.norfolkda.com)



# ELDER ABUSE



## What Everyone Should Know

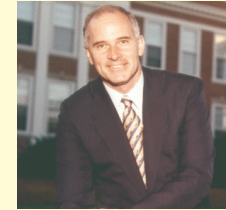
### A Letter from:



**Norfolk District Attorney,  
William R. Keating:**



Too often, seniors do not recognize the signs of elder abuse among their peers, or even see the behavior that is making them uncomfortable in their own lives as being abusive.



Elder abuse perpetrated by a family member is just one form of domestic violence. And there are special statutes, often with enhanced penalties, for criminals who target elders.

Not long ago elder abuse did not have the recognition it has today. In response to the growing number of older people and their diverse needs, the Older Americans Act of 1965 has been amended and now calls for a range of programs that offer service and opportunities for older citizens especially those at risk for losing their independence.

As District Attorney of Norfolk County, my first responsibility is to prosecute the perpetrators of crimes like these. However, the prevention of these crimes is also my responsibility and I do not take that task lightly. My mission is to empower the older Americans of Norfolk County and heighten their awareness to recognize the red flags and warning signs of a dangerous situation.

My office has initiated several new prevention programs that are being presented in the communities of Norfolk County in order to address these problems.

Older adults who have worked hard all of their lives deserve the right to enjoy retirement with dignity, not fear — and my staff and I are dedicated to helping you do just that.

*William R. Keating*

## What is Elder Abuse?

*It is defined as the abuse, neglect or exploitation of people 60 years and over. The three basic categories of elder abuse are domestic abuse, institutional abuse, and neglect. Under any of these categories the type of abuse may be physical, psychological, emotional, financial, and/or abuse from a caregiver. The following are the definitions for the categories of abuse.*

- **Domestic Abuse** is the abuse of an older person by a family member such as a spouse, child, or friend who resides with the older person.
- **Institutional Abuse** is defined as the abuse of an older person who resides in a nursing home, group home, or care facility.
- **Neglect** is the failure of any person, having the care or custody of an elder, to provide the degree of care, that a reasonable person in a like position would provide. This does not include a situation in which an older person makes a conscious choice to place their health and safety in jeopardy.

# What Everyone Young and Old Should Know About Elder Abuse

## Types of abuse

### Physical

Any physical pain or injury which is willfully inflicted upon an elder by a person who has care or custody of, or who stands in a position of trust with that elder, constitutes physical abuse. This includes, but is not limited to, direct beatings, sexual assault, unreasonable physical restraint, and prolonged deprivation of food or water.

### Psychological/Emotional

The willful infliction of mental suffering by a person in a position of trust with an elder, constitutes psychological/emotional abuse. Examples of such abuse are: verbal assaults, threats, instilling fear, humiliation, intimidation, or isolation of an elder.

### Abandonment

Abandonment is the desertion or willful forsaking of an elder by any person having the care and custody of that elder under circumstances in which a reasonable person would continue to provide care of custody.

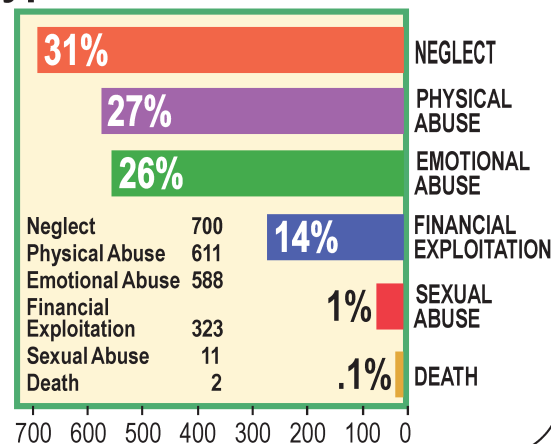
### Financial/Internet Abuse

Perpetrators of these abuse crimes not only steal or misuse an elder's money or property, they may also target them through the Internet. Con artists advertise products on the Internet, ask for your money up front — and may never deliver. They may also e-mail you directly with unsolicited offers. Criminals also obtain personal information (name, address, and date of birth) and use it to obtain credit in the name of a victim.

### Fiscal Year 2001 — Massachusetts Types of Abuse Found

*The types of abuse listed are the main type of abuse found in each case investigated. Most cases involve multiple types of abuse.*

*Percentages noted on the graph are the total cases where abuse was found, and services provided.*



Resource: E.O.E.A.

# How to Recognize Elder Abuse

### Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse

- Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds
- An injury incompatible with history
- An injury which has not been properly cared for
- Absence of hair/hemorrhaging below scalp
- Bruises, welts, discoloration
- Soiled clothing or bed
- Loss of weight
- Dehydration/Malnutrition
- Burns caused by cigarettes, acids, friction from rope

### Possible indicators of Psychological/Emotional Abuse

- Helplessness
- Fear
- Hesitation to talk openly
- Denial
- Confusion/Agitation/Anger
- Withdrawal
- Depression

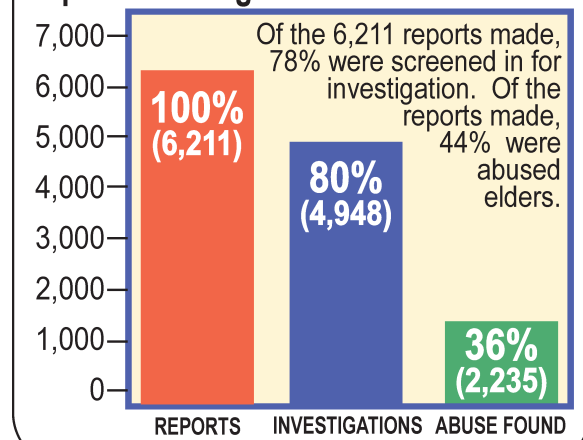
### Possible Indicators of Financial/Internet Abuse

- Unusual or inappropriate activity in bank accounts
- Signatures on checks that do not resemble elder's signature
- Numerous unpaid bills, overdue rent, when someone was placed in charge of this task
- Missing personal belongings such as art, silverware, or jewelry
- Deliberate isolation by caregiver of an older adult from family members and friends resulting in caregiver having total control
- The offer sounds too good to be true
- You are asked for money up front
- You must pay immediately

### Possible Indicators of Neglect/Abuse by Caregiver

- Dirt/urine smell or other health and safety hazards in elder's living environment
- Suicidal acts, wanderings, refusing medical attention, isolation, substance abuse
- Lack of toilet facilities, utilities or animal-infested living quarters
- Rashes, sores, inadequate clothing, malnourished, dehydration
- Confusion/non-responsive/memory failure, incoherent
- Attitudes of indifference toward dependent person or an obvious lack of assistance
- Aggressive behavior by the caregiver toward the dependent person
- Problems with alcohol or drugs
- Inappropriate display of affection by the caregiver
- Flirtations, coyness, etc., are possible indicators of inappropriate relationship
- Defensiveness by caregiver

### Fiscal Year 2001 — Massachusetts Reports Investigated and Substantiated



Resource: E.O.E.A.

For TTY/TDD users call Massachusetts Relay Service

1-800-439-2370 / Voice: 1-800-439-0183